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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 /064 W
----------292018Z 023323 /44
R 291108Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5449
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: FORMATION OF TWO NEW LEFTIST BLOCS

1. FOLLOWING PROTRACTED DISCUSSIONS, MOKED, HAOLAM HAZEH, AND ONE OF THE SEVERAL BLACK PANTHER FACTIONS HAVE AGREED TO UNITE IN A LEFT-WING BLOC UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MK ARYE (LOVA) ELIAV, WHO HEADS THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALISTS IN THE PRESENT KNESSET. THE NEW BLOC CALLS ITSELF "SHELLI," AN ACRONYM FROM THE HEBREW LETTERS FOR "PEACE FOR ISRAEL" OR "EQUALITY IN ISRAEL." THE FIRST FOUR NAMES ON THE KNESSET LIST FOR THE ELECTION ARE ELIAV; MK MEIR PA'IL, WHO NOW REPRESENTS MOKED IN THE KNESSET; FORMER MK URI AVNERY, LEADER OF HAOLAM HAZEH (SEE TEL AVIV 2019) AND OWNER OF A WEEKLY SEX AND SENSATION MAGAZINE; AND SA'ADIA MARCIANO OF THE BLCAK PANTHERS. LED BY PERSONALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE COUNCIL, SHELLI FAVORS ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES "WITH AGREED CHANGES"
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AND AN INDEPENDENT WEST BANK STATE. ITS PROGRAM ALSO EMPHASIZES THE NEED TO CLOSE THE SOCIAL GAP. ELIAV, PA'IL, AND AVNERY HAVE REPORTEDLY AGREED THAT SHOULD SHELLI WIN ONLY ONE SEAT IN THE MAY ELECTION, THEY WOULD EACH SERVE IN THE KNESSET IN TURN BY RESIGNING AFTER A YEAR IN FAVOR OF THE NEXT NAME ON THE LIST.

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2. FORMATION OF A SECOND LEFTIST GROUP WAS
ANNOUNCED RECENTLY WITH THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN
ANOTHER BLACK PANTHER MOVEMENT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP
OF SHALOM COHEN AND ERSTWHILE HEAD OF THE ASHDOD
PORT WORKERS, YESHOSHUA PERETZ, TO FORM A LIST UNDER
THE NAME "HOFESH" (FREEDOM). THE NEW GROUP WILL
APPARENTLY CONCENTRATE ON THE UNDERPRIVILEGED
SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION BY EMPHASIZING ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL ISSUES. PERETZ IS FAMOUS FOR HAVING
SINGLE-HANDEDLY ORDERED THE SHUTDOWN OF THE ASHDOD
PORT TWO YEARS AGO IN A LABOR DISPUTE.

3. COMMENT: SHELLI'S FAUNDERS HAD HOPED TO INDUCE
A SPLIT IN MAPAM. THEY ALSO HOPED THAT THE MINORITY OF THAT
PARTY OPPOSED TO REMAINING IN THE ALIGNMENT WITH
THE LABOR PARTY WOULD JOIN THEM IN A WIDER
LEFTIST ANT-ALIGNMENT FRONT. THUS FAR THERE IS
LITTLE SIGN OF THIS HOPE BEING REALIZED. LOOKING
AHEAD, AVNERY RECENTLY TOLD US THAT SHELLI HOPES
TO DRAW OFF FROM THE DMC ENOUGH TO THE ANTI-
ALIGNMENT PROTEST VOTERS, SO AS TO PRECLUDE THE
POSSIBILITY OF THE DMC EMERGING FROM THE ELECTION
WITH SUFFIECIENT SEATS TO PERMIT FORMATION OF A
RIGHT-WING LIKUD, DMC COALITION GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER,
THE AGREEMENT AMONG SHELLI'S LEADERS TO ROTATE THE
ONE SEAT THEY ARE FAIRLY CONFIDENT OT WINNING IS AT
ONCE A MEASURE OF THEIR LIMITED APPEAL AND OF
THEIR POLITICAL REALISM. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT
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THE NEW GROUP COULD EVEN WIN TWO OR POSSIBLY
THREE SEATS, BUT ANY MORE IS UNLIKELY. ON THE
OTHER HAND, HOFESH'S PROSPECTS ARE DUBIOUS AT BEST.
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